

Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

1. (original) A method for sterilizing and producing a fish-paste product by utilizing microbubbles comprising the steps of:

    adding ozone gas-containing microbubbles generated in water to raw materials of a fish-paste product,

    coating the interfaces of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles with tissues in raw materials of the fish-paste product thereby maintaining the longevity of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles, and

    giving stimulation to a part of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles thereby rupturing coating shells of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles.

2. (original) A germ-free fish-paste product maintaining an antibacterial ability obtained by the sterilizing production method described in Claim 1.

3. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of adding the ozone gas-containing microbubbles to raw materials of the fish-paste product comprises adding water containing the ozone gas-containing microbubbles.

Claim 4 (canceled)

5. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the step of adding ozone gas-containing microbubbles to raw materials of the fish-paste product comprises spray a mist of water containing the ozone gas-containing microbubbles.

Claim 6 (canceled)

7. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the tissues are protein and lipid contained in the fish-paste product.

Claim 8 (canceled)

9. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the stimulation comprises rubbing together raw materials of the fish-paste products at the time of pestling of the raw materials.

Claim 10 (canceled)

11. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the stimulation comprises high-frequency irradiation of raw materials of the fish-paste product.

Claim 12 (canceled)

13. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the stimulation comprises microwave irradiation of raw materials of the fish-paste product.

Claim 14 (canceled)

15. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the stimulation comprises heating raw materials of the fish-paste product.

Claim 16 (canceled)

17. A method according to Claim 1, wherein in the step of processing and packaging the fish-paste product following the step of rupturing coating shells of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles, the

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packaged fish-paste product are subjected to the stimulation to rupture coating shells of the ozone gas-containing microbubbles contained in the fish-paste products thereby sterilizing the fish-paste product.

Claim 18 (canceled)